

City of Newton
Department of Planning and Development

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**Presentation before the Zoning and
Planning Committee on
Docket Item #237-14
October 15, 2014**



The problem

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- Neighborhood character is being eroded by teardowns that are replaced by large homes out of scale with the neighborhood
- Increased density



Mayor ~ Will talk about Comp Plan and HUD goals – Long-term view of sustainability and livability

Dorit ~ Will talk about people and outcomes in a holistic way

Jayne ~ Will talk about the changing demographics and considerations for seniors

Identify other staff who are assisting:

Rob Muollo

Alice Walkup

James Kupfer

Rieko Hayashi

Meghan Kennedy

Linda Walsh

Alice Ingerson

James Freas

The problem

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- Loss of:
 - Moderately-priced homes defined as \leq \$800,000
 - Loss of historic homes
 - Socio-economic and generational diversity

	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14
Demolition Permits*	44	54	64	72	80	102
New House Building Permits*	48	48	68	69	81	110

* Includes single-, two- and multi-family buildings

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Proposed Solution

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- One-year moratorium on residential full and partial demolitions
- Time to review:
 - Design regulations
 - ✦ height, setbacks, size
 - ✦ two-family v. single-family attached
 - ✦ garages in front, side-facing houses
 - Policies regarding conversion from single-family to multi-family dwellings
 - Drainage issues
 - Preservation of “naturally affordable” housing stock

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Considerations

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- Existing controls

- Historic Demolition Delay



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Considerations

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- Existing controls

- Historic Demolition Delay

- ✦ FY 2014 Newton Historical Commission reviewed 254 applications
 - ✦ Found 69 structures to be “preferably preserved”

- Small number of houses are not already protected

- ✦ 91.1% of single- and two-family houses are > 50 years old
 - ✦ 32% of homes < 50 years old are also < 10 years old
 - ✦ Only 752 houses < 50 years old have > 3000 square feet of living area

- Enforcement is difficult

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Considerations

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- Neighborhood character



Which house was demolished and rebuilt?

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Considerations

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- Neighborhood character



Which house was demolished and rebuilt?

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Considerations

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- Neighborhood character



What is the character of this neighborhood?

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Considerations

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- Neighborhood character



Under proposed moratorium, this addition would not have been allowed despite not being seen from the street.

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Considerations

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- **Moderately-priced housing**

- Median home price in Newton in 2013 was \$884,000
 - ✦ To afford this house with no “cost burden” household must earn between \$145,000 and \$244,000 annually
- Median household income for a household of four in Newton is \$104,887
 - ✦ Can afford home priced between \$382,000 and \$635,500 with no cost burden
- Area Median Income (AMI) for household of four is \$94,400
 - ✦ Can afford home priced between \$343,650 and \$572,000 with no cost burden

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Alternative Solutions

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- **Zoning Reform, Phase 2**

- Master Planning effort for all neighborhoods and village centers
- Address the challenges of “working within existing zoning designations...” to preserve neighborhood character
- Comprehensive approach to systemic problem rather than piecemeal
- More balanced regulation than moratorium which could hurt many more than are helped
- Part of Zoning Reform, Phase 2

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Recommended Next Steps

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- Approve Zoning Reform, Phase 1
- Begin Zoning Reform, Phase 2
 - Engage community in master planning process that will reflect:
 - ✦ Local character
 - ✦ Community needs and expectations